

# **Prolegomena**

to a

## **History of Buddhist Philosophy**

By  
**B. M. Barua, M.A., D.Lit. (Lond.),**  
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## PREFACE



I undertook to prepare in June last a course of two Extension Lectures at the instance of the Hon'ble the President of the Council of Post-graduate Teaching in Arts. These lectures are to be judged as a mere introduction to the study of Buddhist Philosophy from the historical stand-point. It is however hoped that a few suggestions brought forward in course of developing the main point may be of some help to the students of Buddhism and of Buddhist Philosophy.

It is a privilege to have an opportunity of expressing my deep sense of gratitude to the President for the inspiration by which he dispelled my doubts as to the urgent need of the study of Buddhist thought in its historical evolution. But I must also acknowledge my obligation to the staff of the Post-graduate Council and of the University Press, by whose kind assistance the pages appear at last in print. Lastly I owe my teachers and friends in England and in India an immense debt of gratitude for many valuable suggestions and help without which I would not have ventured to undertake the arduous task.

B. M. B.

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By a History of Buddhist Philosophy we mean a scientific inquiry into successive stages in the genesis and increasing organic complexity of a system of thought in India, which, inspite of its most divergent nature, may be reasonably supposed to have evolved out of the nucleus or system as afforded by the discourses of Gotama the Buddha. It implies necessarily a limitation of the subject of its investigation, a twofold limitation in place and time, without defining which we are sure to be lost in the enormous mass of facts that have accumulated through ages.

The two-fold limitation of our subject of investigation.

In the first place, the phrase "in India" signifies that "Buddhism" in its rather loose modern use must be said to have undergone from time to time a peculiar process of change among peoples other than Indian. "Buddhism really covers," as Mrs. Rhys Davids emphatically claims, "the thought and culture of the great part of India for some centuries, as well as that of Further India (*pace* China and Japan) up till the present"<sup>1</sup>, whereas the scope of the present essay for the simple necessity of its being limited, hardly leaves room for carrying our researches beyond India-proper.

The limitation defined—in place.

There is a still deeper significance of the phrase, the which we might set forth by revealing our inner attitude towards the teachers of those foreign countries where "Buddhism" was transplanted, struck firm root, and has flourished ever

Countries excluded from our consideration—

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<sup>1</sup> Buddhist Psychology, being an inquiry into the analysis and theory of mind in Pali literature. London, 1914, pp. 1-2.

since, in one form or another. The countries in question may be taken in groups, and disposed of summarily as follows :—

To take into consideration the South-East group comprising Ceylon, Burma and Siam. The record of teachers in these

1. Ceylon, Burma, three representative countries, who have Siam. contributed either to the interpretation or to the fresh articulation of Buddhist thinking is far from the richest. Reliable traditions<sup>1</sup> place but a few philosophical manuals and commentaries on the list of the best products of Ceylon and Burma. These also belong “all of them to a time contemporary with” so-called “Dark ages” of European culture,<sup>2</sup> “or to the epoch immediately succeeding them.”

It need not detain us, then, long to estimate even the relative worth of novel theories and interpretations, if any, that these otherwise valuable treatises may still yield. Suffice it to say that from whatever standpoint their contents be judged, the historian cannot fail to discover at once the secondary character of these handbooks and expositions, based as they evidently were on some older Indian models.<sup>3</sup> A closer scrutiny also may end in this general result, that the history of “Buddhism” in the countries above-mentioned is chiefly that of a “natural religion” inseparably allied with the precepts of conduct and the rules of life, and serving as a source of inspiration to the artistic and imaginative faculties of mankind. The Buddhist teachers of Ceylon and Further India appear to be in history but so many faithful custodians of Pali literature as a whole. But even for this much we, and all those who

<sup>1</sup> *e.g.* Those recorded in the *Saddhamma-Saṅgaha* by Dhammapāla, ed. Saddhānanda, J.P.T.S., 1890, p. 62; *Gandhavaṃsa*, ed. Minayeff, J.P.T.S., 1886, p. 61; *Sāsanavaṃsa*, ed. Mrs. Bode, P.T.S., 1897, pp. 41f.

<sup>2</sup> Editor's preface, “compendium of Philosophy,” being a translation by Mr. S. Z. Aung of the *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha*, P.T.S., 1910, pp. viii-xi. The following are the Singhalese and Burmese works on Philosophy, now extant: Ceylon:—*Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha*, *Paramattha Vinicchaya*, *Nāmarūpa Pariccheda* by Anuruddha; *Mohavicchedanī* by Kassapa; *Khema-pakarapa* by Khema; *Abhidhammattha Vibhāvanī* by Sumaṅgala, etc. Burma:—*Saṅkhepa-Vaṇṇanā*, *Nāmacāra-dīpaka* and *Visuddhimaggagandhi* by Saddhamma Jotipāla, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Not to mention other works that are still later, Anuruddha's three compendia presuppose such older Indian works as Buddhādatta's *Abhidhammāvatāra* and Rūpārūpabhāga; Vasubandhu's *Abhidharma-Kośa* and Dhammapāla's *Sacca-Saṅkhepa*, etc.

are interested in the Buddhist thought and culture, must remain ever so grateful.

Let us now examine the North-East group represented by China, Tibet, Korea, Japan and the rest. An eminent anti-

quarian like Mr. Samuel Laing might well claim that "Chinese civilisation is in one respect the oldest in the world, that is, it is the one which has come down to the present day from remote antiquity with the fewest changes."<sup>1</sup> True, but Mr. Laing's statement regarding what he calls "the moral and ceremonial precepts of sages and philosophers" must be interpreted with caution, because Confucius and other Chinese teachers whom he had in mind, and whom we all know to have been born before the importation of Indian culture into China, were not philosophers in the strict sense of the term. These genuine products of the Chinese soil and surroundings might claim at most the position of a Solomon or a Cāṇakya, but not that of a Plato or an Epictetus. Indeed, in extending the name of a philosopher indiscriminately to every man of genius in the world's history we shall do well to bear in mind the distinction so sharply drawn by Socrates in his Apology<sup>2</sup> between a philosopher *qua* philosopher on the one hand, and the poets, prophets and seers on the other: "I soon discovered this with regard to the poets that they do not affect their object by wisdom, but by a certain natural inspiration and under the influence of enthusiasm like prophets and seers: for these also say many fine things but they understand nothing that they say."<sup>3</sup> But of the North-East group, China was the first to receive the light of "Buddhism" from India and to spread it gradually over her great neighbours, Korea and Japan, leaving alone for the moment Siberia and Java.

Tibet, including Central Asia, comes second to China in importance to the writer on "Buddhism as a religion". The original contribution of Tibetan teachers, like that of the

<sup>1</sup> Human origins, R.P.A., 1913, p. 31

<sup>2</sup> Apology, 7.

<sup>3</sup> F. W. Rolleston's "Teaching of Epictetus" p. XXI.

Chinese, towards the development of Buddhist philosophy seems far from extensive. Its colour-doctrine or symbolic mysticism can strike the imagination of none but an occultist or a passionate lover of the doctrine "Secret".

So far as the North-East group of countries is concerned the history of "Buddhism" is largely that of a "Supernatural religion", fostering within itself all the lofty but generally impracticable and not infrequently grotesque ideals of love, pity, piety and humanity that human imagination has ever conceived. Even of a religion of this kind the origin must necessarily be sought for in the writings of the Mahāyāna teachers of India.<sup>1</sup>

We cannot but admit that there were and probably are some great schools of thought in China, Tibet and Japan. Each school of thought implies *pari passu* existence of an academy where a certain curriculum of texts is followed. But a careful research will disclose, if it has not already disclosed, that the eminent founders of these schools and academies were some distinguished Indian teachers or a galaxy of their foreign disciples. The proof of this statement is not far to seek; it is amply furnished by the Chinese catalogues and Tibetan histories now extant. These show that all the best known classics of Chinese and Tibetan philosophies were originally, almost without exception, translations from some Indian writers, not exclusively Buddhist. Thus for all practical purposes we may look up to the Buddhist teachers of China and Tibet chiefly as translators of Indian texts, especially Buddhist Sanskrit, most of which are now irrevocably lost in the original<sup>2</sup>.

"Buddhism" was after all an exotic transplanted from India into other lands. Whenever, therefore, the problem of the development of Buddhist philosophy is seriously faced,

<sup>1</sup> e. g. Aśvaghōṣa, Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, Asaṅga, and others.

<sup>2</sup> Vide Bunyio Nanjio's Catalogue of the Chinese Tripiṭaka, Hackmann's "Buddhism as a Religion" pp. 78-79, Vidyabhusan's Indian Logic: Medieval School, Calcutta, 1909, pp. 82-149. Among the huge collection of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka in the Chinese translation we have only two distinct works of other systems, viz., Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika. H. U. Vaiśeṣika Philosophy. Oriental Translation Series, Vol. XXV, p. 1.

the historian must be led back finally to India for a satisfactory solution, if such be at all possible; from whatever point of view we look at it, "Buddhism" must be considered a purely Indian growth, if we are at all desirous of making our studies in the subject fruitful, now or hereafter. And if by "Buddhism" we rightly understand a definite and distinct movement of thought in India, then we are bound to assume *a priori* that it necessarily bears some family-relations to other earlier and contemporary movements in the same country. And all single movements constitute in our historical perspective a whole movement of thought to which the name of Indian philosophy is truly applicable.

Buddhist philosophy, a purely indigenous growth of India, which is one of the two original homes of philosophic reflections.

By the testimony furnished by the Greek Ambassador<sup>1</sup> and Greco-Roman historians<sup>2</sup> we know that in ancient times "Divine Philosophy" had chosen but two widely separated countries as her sacred homesteads of which the earlier one was India, leaving out of account the question of better, worse or equal. It would again be a great mistake to suppose that despite enormous distances, despite paucity of means of transport and communication, ancient peoples were absolutely unknown to one another.<sup>3</sup> Unless we presuppose some sort of knowledge of India's rich plains on the part of the Greek people, we can never explain the historical fact of Macedonian

India's thought-relations with the west.

<sup>1</sup> Megasthenes who visited India in the 4th century B. C. See for his views on points of contact between Indian and Greek thinkers McCrindle's "Ancient India", pp. The Sophists were the class of Indian people who were uppermost in the thought of the Ambassador.

<sup>2</sup> e. g. Ptolemy, Arrian, Strabo, Diodorus, Pliny, Plutarch.

<sup>3</sup> The Yavanas (Ionians or Greeks) do not seem to have played any rôle in the pre-Buddhist literature of India. See Bühler's 'Manu' p. cxiv. As for the ancient Buddhist literature, we have been able so far to discover just one interesting passage in which Buddha said to Assalāyana—"Thus friend, have I heard: in Yona, Kamboja and other outlying localities (neighbouring countries) there exist but two social grades, the master and the slave, flexible enough to allow men to pass easily from one into the other" (Assalāyana Sutta, Majjhimanikāya, ed. Chalmers, II p. 149); of the two later treatises on 'Polity', the Brihaspati Sūtra (ed. Thomas 111, 117-118) refers to the peculiarities of the mountainous Yavana countries and the Sūkranti to those of Yavana Philosophy. But it is no wonder that as employed in them, the name Yavana has reference to Persians or Afghans. See Vincent Smith's Early History of India, pp. 173, 255 and 367.



conquests in India. The Pythagorean doctrine of transmigration is generally traced back to some Eastern nations, notably Indian.<sup>1</sup> Supposing this doctrine does not afford a positive proof of communication between the two countries, we may with better justification regard Pyrrhonism as a connecting link.

Pyrrho of Elis is said to have accompanied Alexander in his Indian campaign;<sup>2</sup> he "studied philosophy under Indian Gymnosophists and Chaldean Magi, was the originator in European thought of a great and permanent philosophic movement."<sup>3</sup> The illustrious Colebrooke identified the Gymnosophists in Greek records with the Jains, but they should be identified, as we have sought to establish elsewhere,<sup>4</sup> rather with the disciples of Sañjaya, the famous Indian Sceptic an elder contemporary of Buddha. Thus Alexander's invasion has a double significance in history, inasmuch as it resulted in the establishment for the first time of a twofold tie between India and Greece, *viz.*, political and intellectual. Through the Gymnosophists and Pyrrho we find a clue even to continued kinship between ancient Indian thought and some of the great modern occidental philosophies preceding Schopenhauer's. From Schopenhauer onwards we enter upon a new period of thought-relations of India with western countries at large.

Now when in the eager hope of finding "Buddhism" in its full glory and pristine vigour, holding its own amid many keen competitors in the field, we confine for a moment our investigations to modern India (this word being considered to cover an extensive period from the fourteenth century down to the present time), we are apt to be disappointed at the outset. The feeling hard to resist from

Decadence of Buddhism and of Philosophy generally in modern India.

<sup>1</sup> Von Shroeder, Pythagoras und die Inder.

<sup>2</sup> W. Windelband, A History of Philosophy (English translation), 1910, p. 163: "He accompanied Alexander on his journey to Asia, together with a follower of Democritus, Anaxarchus by name."

<sup>3</sup> T. W. Rolleston's Teaching of Epictetus, p. XXI.

<sup>4</sup> My "Indian Philosophy", *loc. cit.*

first to last is that of amazement mixed with deep sorrow. Almost all the scenes of its manifold activities are still there, while the spirit that once animated the whole landscape is gone. Even as an Indian Buddhist of to-day would flatter himself, the shrines and cairns jealously guarding the sacred relics of old can be brought to view by the energetic stroke of the "pick and shovel" of the archeologist. Even the monumental columns signalling through the ages the triumphant sway of Buddhist thoughts and ideals over the minds of men stand rudely here and there on the surface of the earth. Even the bands of pilgrims can be seen progressing reverentially from different quarters of the globe towards the promised land. Even the traveller can come across some thousands of Buddhists holding fast the faith of their ancestors along the spurs of the Himalayas, in the Assam Valley and Chittagong: nay, the antiquarian can eventually discover in the jungles of Orissa a whole community of men rallying round the banner of Dharmarāja, apparently a later metamorphosis of Buddha.<sup>1</sup> But yet the sum-total of impressions of an onlooker is that of desolation caused by chaotic heaps of ruins. Gotama the Buddha, who is represented in early records—the Tripitaka as a teacher of wisdom to the gods and men, active from the first to the very last moment of his career, lives among his posterity as an idol, lifeless and inactive, like a mummy or a fossil! His present adherents are driven, or survive in an obscure corner of the land; his system has become a stranger at home, nay, sunk into a parasite, whereas he himself is allowed to figure in popular myths as a fabulous incarnation of God, whose principal and only message to this world was *negatively* non-injury to life (*ahiṃsā*), and *positively* compassion (*dayā*). Most of his learned Indian admirers run into the other extreme of error, when accepting without proper examination the authority of later legendary and poetic compositions of the Buddhists, they lay undue stress on his

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<sup>1</sup> CENSUS Report of 1911, part I, p. 209. "The Buddhists in Orissa are nearly all Saraks, of whom 1,833 returned their religions as Buddhism. Attention was first drawn to the Buddhistic Saraks of Orissa by Mr. Gait in the Bengal Census Report of 1901".

renunciation, and emphasise his pre-eminence above other teachers of mankind who are of humble birth, by extolling him as born an heir-apparent to a powerful sovereignty. Gotama in his own teaching used a striking simile<sup>1</sup> to bring home to his disciples the comprehensiveness of the truth or law as he conceived it, contrasted with the littleness of grasp shown by most of his contemporaries and predecessors. This simile is singularly enough employed by modern demagogues to illustrate what they consider our right attitude towards contending systems. But how great is the contrast ! The elephant of Buddha's simile stands for the truth in its completeness, the blind men are the enquirers who approach it each from his own point of view, each one failing therefore to grasp it as a whole, but to the idle eclectic the same image is meant to content the ignorant with the poorest eclectic notion of the whole truth as a mere conglomeration of partial truths contributed by different and opposed systems. The contrast in the teaching by the simile is fundamental. In the case of Buddha it stimulates the keen and critical search of truths, and as employed by the demagogues, it flatters the slothfulness of the mind that shrinks from the honest effort. These considerations lead us to conclude that "Buddhism" as a movement of thought has completely died out in modern India. A deeper reflection would make it evident that almost the same fatal end has befallen philosophy as a whole. The modern period, the nature of which is clearly foreshadowed in the expressions of mediaeval poetry—the Epics, Purāṇas, Agamas, and Tantras—exhibits all the chief characteristics of a religious epoch during which India has become altogether a land of song and legend, ecstasy and devotion, and of prayer, fear and superstition. Apart from a few scholastic survivals and expositions of the classical thought, the rigorous treatment of problems and the vigorous grasp of principles are quite foreign to modern Indian teachers. It may be of course that

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<sup>1</sup> Viz., that of an elephant examined by a number of people born blind, each feeling a particular part or limb of the animal. Udāna, 80 ; Similes in the Nikāyas, P. T. S. 1907, p. 11.

the teachings of Caitanya yield throughout lofty and even clear conceptions of God, Soul, Immortality and love; that the writings of his disciples together with the songs of Rām Prasāda and the sweet utterances of Rāmakṛṣṇa are saturated with the terminology of the Sāṅkhya and Vedānta in their popular developments; or that Vivekānanda's interpretations of the system of the Bhagavadgītā reveal the working of an original mind, and furnish a fresh stimulus to the philosophic activity in the country;<sup>1</sup> but there is hardly anything in them to show that methodical handling of questions after questions as they arise before the inquiring mind which characterises the quest of a philosopher.

From this it does not follow as a consequence that for us India has at any time changed once for all in her long history into a land where the philosopher is refused shelter, or where he is persecuted simply because his views and judgments of things do not fall in harmony with accepted beliefs of the age.<sup>2</sup> Quite the contrary; for nothing is more true as a general observation than that there is till now the same insatiable thirst for knowledge, the same spontaneous reverence for the wise and the learned, the same amount of freedom and facilities allowed for speculation and hair-splitting argumentation.<sup>3</sup> The "philosophies", too, are studied with industry and attention, by students as well as the laity.

Modification and  
Justification of the  
fore-going remarks.

<sup>1</sup> There is, perhaps, another notable exception. The merit of Bankimchandra—"The Scott of Bengal" should be judged not only as a novelist,—but also as one who keenly sought to stem the tide of emotional exuberance by awakening his readers to the deepest self-consciousness of a civilised man, and to revive once more the spirit of criticism, literary or otherwise, in the land of Buddha Gotama. His criticism of the current notion of the divinity of Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa-Caritra) may be taken as an example. His other works, particularly his "Miscellaneous Essays" will be read as a literary master-piece, rich in indirect suggestion as to what should be the course of Indian philosophy, when it sinks into obscurity because of the modern predilection for the organised thoughts of the West.

<sup>2</sup> It goes without saying that many lives in the West since Galileo have been embittered for their wisdom by the obstinacy of the narrow-minded theologians. As for India, when the unknown author of the Sūrya Siddhānta proved that the earth is round and that it moves round the Sun, there was but one feeling throughout the country, namely that of admiration.

<sup>3</sup> See Max Müller's bold pronouncement upon the issue raised in his "Six Systems", p. 2. Even His Excellency the Governor of Bengal and Rector of Calcutta University observed in his famous convocation speech on March 2nd 1918: "Whereas in the West the

The difference lies in the motive and in the result. The systems of philosophy (erroneously counted six)<sup>1</sup> are seldom studied in the spirit and manner of a bold seeker after truth, to see things for himself, to formulate principles from his own experience, to frame definitions from his own concepts, to adduce proofs from his own reason, in short, to go beyond existing systems or to evolve, if possible, a new philosophy. Perhaps the learning by rote which engenders in a great majority of cases false pride without giving understanding, and which is truly the bane of modern Sanskrit Scholarship in India, is largely responsible for it. It is so because, as we perceive, there is at the bottom of Sanskrit learning in general that reliance on authority, that veneration for traditions, which imperceptibly leads men to glorify the past without a sufficient knowledge of what the past is, or in what relation it stands to the present. This naturally begets a kind of self-satisfaction in mind, acting as a deterrant to all inquiries.

The study of philosophy is conducted nowadays in India almost invariably on the lines of Mahā Kaccāyana, the author of the Netti-pakaraṇa and Petakopadesa. As he points out, the result of such a study as this can be at best *sutamayi paññā*, knowledge derived from the words or judgments of others (*parato ghosā*), in contradistinction to *cintāmayi* and *bhāvanāmayi paññā*, the former implying knowledge that bears throughout the stamp of one's own reflective reasoning or emerges as a consequence from self-induced activities of reason, and the latter, knowledge that is coördinated of the aforementioned two.<sup>2</sup>

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spirit of philosophy is counted by the learned few, she moves abroad freely among the people in this country ... I should have expected to find the deep thought of India which has sprung from the genius of the people themselves, being discussed and taught as the normal course in an Indian University; and the speculations and systems of other peoples from other lands introduced to the students at a later stage after he has obtained a comprehensive view of the philosophic wisdom of his own country."

<sup>1</sup> Max Müller's "Six systems of Indian philosophy." Cf. Saṭṭan's *Mapi Mekhalai*. Alberuni's 'India' and Jaina *Saḍḍarśana Samuccaya*.

<sup>2</sup> Netti-pakaraṇa, ed. Hardy, p. 8.

"... parato ghosā sutamayī paññā, paccattasamuṭṭhitā yonisomanasikārā cintāmayi paññā, yañ parato ca ghosena paccattasamuṭṭhitena ca yonisomanasikārena uppajjati, ayañ bhāvanāmayi paññā".

Immanuel Kant's division of knowledge into "historical" or "cognitio ex datis" and "rational" or "cognitio ex principiis" may be cited as an apt parallel.<sup>1</sup>

"A person", says Kant in illustration of his significant distinction, "who, in the usual sense, has learnt a system of philosophy, *e.g.* the Wolfian, though he may carry in his head all the principles, definitions, and proofs, as well as the division of the whole system, and have it all at his fingers' ends, possesses yet none but a complete historical knowledge of Wolfian philosophy. His knowledge and judgments are no more than what has been given him ..... knowledge in his case did not come from reason, and though objectively it is historical only ..... knowledge which is rational objectively (*i.e.*, which can arise originally from a man's own reason only), can then only be so called subjectively also, when they have been drawn from the general resources of reason, from which criticism, nay, even the rejection of what has been learnt, may arise."<sup>2</sup>

What is the logical consequence of such a paucity of *cintāmayi paññā* or "rational knowledge", and of such a prevalence of *sutamayi paññā* or "historical knowledge"? Neither the hair-splitting discussions so powerfully carried on by the Pandits, nor the arduous studies of famished, parrot-like Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit scholars can give birth to a new philosophy, worthy of the name.

However the very fact that the zeal for the study of philosophy is still kept up in India infuses us with great hopes for the future. It leads us to hold with Professor Walter Raleigh that "hundreds of them must do their daily

The limitation defined—in time.

The history of Buddhist philosophy extends from circa 600 B.C.—circa 1050 A.D.

<sup>1</sup> The opening paragraphs of the *Peṭakopadesa* refer to two kinds of knowledge—*sutamayi* and *cintāmayi*, the latter including no doubt, *bhāvanāmayi paññā*.

„Tattha yo ca parato ghosā yo ca ajjhataṃ manasikāro ime dve paññāyaparato ghosena yā uppajjati paññā ayaṃ vuccati sutamayi paññā; yā ajjhataṃ yoniso manasikārena uppajjati paññā ayaṃ vuccati cintāmayi paññā ti dve paññā veditabbā”.

<sup>2</sup> Critique of Pure Reason, Max Müller's translation, Vol. II, pp. 717-18.

work and keep their appointments before there can be one great man of even moderate dimensions". But what is important here to note is that, except for some valuable works on Nyāya, the history of Indian Philosophy, which commenced at so early a period might be said to close with Sāyana-Mādhava (1331 A.D.). Strictly speaking, this sad remark applies to the History of Buddhist Philosophy with which we are concerned at present. It will also be found on a closer examination that the development of Buddhistic thought in India is capable of being more narrowly circumscribed in time, extending as it does from Buddha to Śaṅkarānanda (circa 600 B.C.—1050 A.D.).

To revert to the subject of our present investigation.

The causes of the decline of "Buddhism" in India.

Whether as a movement of thought, or as as a system of faith, the decline of "Buddhism" in India gives rise to a problem of

the greatest historical importance. The problem has already engaged the serious reflections of an able body of scholars since the celebrated Colebrooke,<sup>2</sup> and it is chiefly in the light of the conclusions arrived at, or the suggestions offered, by them that we may venture at all to descend into hidden depths of the past. In the first place, on the

Religious persecution.

evidence of some Brahmin records like the Śaṅkara Vijaya, Colebrooke and Wilson, two among the best known pioneers of the Sanskritists in Europe,

<sup>1</sup> See the powerful introduction of Babu Rajendranath Ghosh to his *Navya-Nyāya*, being a lucid Bengali translation of the *Vyūpti-Pañcaka* in the *Tattva-cintāmaṇi* by Gaṅgeśa-pādhyāya, whose fame as the founder of the Indian Neologic is recognised as a matter of course. In the opinion of so learned a judge as Prof. Brajendranath Seal, the much neglected *Navya-nyāya* has a great historical and metaphysical value in regard to the development of methodology. It "possesses", says Dr. Seal "a great logical value in the conception to which we are made familiar in it, of quantification on a connotative basis, a great scientific value in the investigation of the varieties of *Vyūpti* and *Upādhi*, and a great epistemological value in the precise determination of the various relations of knowledge and being" (*The positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*, p. 290). On the other hand Prof. Ranade finds in the great net-work of *Avacchedakas* woven in the New Logic of India another sad instance of the cobweb of the Logic of the Schoolmen, which in spite of the fineness of its texture, is absolutely of no substance or profit (*The Indian Philosophical Review*, Vol. I., July, 1917, p. 85).

<sup>2</sup> Vincent Smith's *Early History of India*, p. 339.

were led to believe that the disappearance of "Buddhism" from the land of its birth was the natural consequence of a furious religious persecution for which Bhaṭṭa Kumārila, a Behari Brahmin of erudition and influence, was chiefly responsible.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the words of the Rev. W. T. Wilkins, quoted by Prof. Rhys Davids, may be taken to embody this early view. "The disciples of Buddha were so ruthlessly persecuted that all were either slain, exiled, or made to change their faith. There is scarcely a case on record where a religious persecution was so successfully carried out as that by which Buddhism was driven out of India."<sup>2</sup>

But Professor Rhys Davids who has discussed the question in detail,<sup>3</sup> and carefully examined the import of Brahmin records does not believe a word of the statement that he quotes. On the contrary he agrees with Dr. Hofrath Bühler in maintaining that the misconception has arisen from an erroneous inference drawn from expressions of vague boasting, of ambiguous import, and doubtful authority.<sup>4</sup> He directs, therefore, his readers to 'seek elsewhere for the causes of the decline of the Buddhist faith; partly in the changes that took place in the faith itself, partly in the changes that took place in the intellectual standard of the people.'<sup>5</sup>

Prof. R. G. Bhandarkar accounts for the decline of "Buddhism" largely by the Mahāyāna-Doctrine<sup>6</sup> of which the germs as constituted by the Bodhisattva-idea, are to be found in some of the latest canonical books.<sup>7</sup> The want of state-support or the loss of political privileges also might have accelerated the decay. Professor Bhandarkar has shown, more than any

Bhandarkar's views:  
The Bodhisattva-idea: The loss of political privileges.

<sup>1</sup> Colebrooke Misc. Essays I. p. 323; Wilson, Sanskrit Dictionary, p. XIX.

<sup>2</sup> Daily life and Work in India, London, 1888, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> See J. P. T. S. 1876, pp. 108-110.

<sup>4</sup> Buddhist India, p. 319.

<sup>5</sup> Buddhist India, pp. 319-20.

<sup>6</sup> J. R. A. S. Bombay Branch, for 1900, p. 395.

<sup>7</sup> Buddhist India, p. 177.



other, on the evidence of the inscriptions how gradually changes were brought about in the general attitude of king and people towards the Buddhist faith from the 2nd century A.D. onwards, which was till then a powerful rival of Brahmanism and Jainism. The changes were of course from favour to disfavour, from hospitality to hostility.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Vincent Smith does not lose sight of occasional active persecutions of the Buddhists by Hindu kings, like Śaśāṅka, which formed a factor, of however minor importance, in the movement, and the instances of which were very rare. He does not deny that the furious massacres perpetrated by Musalman invaders had a great deal to do with the disappearance of "Buddhism" in several provinces. But in his opinion, the main cause was "the gradual, almost insensible assimilation of Buddhism to Hinduism, which attained to such a point that often it is nearly impossible to draw a line between the mythology and images of the Buddhists and those of the Hindus." A striking illustration of this process of assimilation, as Mr. Smith terms it, might be cited from the present history of Nepal, the chief interest of which lies in "the opportunity presented by it for watching the manner in which the Octopus of Hinduism is slowly strangling its Buddhist victim."<sup>2</sup>

Prof. Hackmann is the single writer, so far as we are aware, who, like Prof. Rhys Davids, has given more than a passing thought to this supremely important question. There are on the whole more points of agreement than those of difference between the two writers. They agree, for instance, in holding that the decline of "Buddhism" in India was a process, slow but continuous. Both have resorted to the

V. Smith's opinion :  
Persecutions by  
some of the orthodox  
Hindu Kings : Muham-  
madan invasion : assi-  
milatation of Buddhism  
to Hinduism.

The views of Hack-  
mann and of Rhys  
Davids compared.

<sup>1</sup> J. R. A. S. Bombay Branch, for 1901. See also *Buddhist India*, pp. 150-52. The passage of the *Anāgata-varuṇa* in which the behaviour of unrighteous kings, ministers and peoples is held responsible for the disappearance of Buddhist learning, J. P. T. S. 1806, p. 35. Anderson's *Pali Reader*, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> *The Early History of India*, 2nd edition, p. 339.

records of the Chinese pilgrims, Fa Hian and Yuan Chwang in particular, for an unmistakable evidence showing how tardy the process really was. They have maintained that the decline was due rather to the lack of the inner vitality of "Buddhism" than to its external conditions. They also have shown how the introduction of foreign notions and rites by foreign nations (who adopted or favoured the Buddhist faith, but never completely renounced their old beliefs and habits) helped the movement, to no small extent, slowly to restore India to "the Brahmanical fold." For them the reign of Kaniska (circa 125-53 A.D.) was a real turning point in the history of the Buddhist faith, literature and vehicle of expression. But it is Prof. Hackmann who has indicated more than any other how the filtration of foreign ideas and cults into the Buddhist doctrine became possible, how, in other words, the manifold signs of decay, so clearly manifest with the progress of time, could as well be traced in the teachings and concessions of Gotama the Buddha himself. Thus he sums up his views:

"Attacks from without also must have injured Buddhism in this country. A powerful tide of Brahmanism, which had long been held in check by Buddhism, now rose everywhere to a high mark. The hostile attitude of the Brahmans against their rivals can be as little doubted as the fact that the latter at this time could no more check it. The tradition telling of a sharp persecution of Buddhists by the Brahmans in the 8th century may, therefore, have historical accuracy. But it cannot be taken that this persecution or any other external cause has done away with Buddhism in India proper. It was of far greater importance that it laboured under a hopeless inward decay. Its slow destruction continued from the 5th to the 11th century A.D. When Islam penetrated at last into India (in the 11th and 12th centuries), all that still remained to be seen of the fallen religion was swept away utterly by the fanaticism of iconoclastic Moslem."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Buddhism as a Religion," Historical Development, pp. 62-63.

Only one more writer remains yet to be considered. In one of his highly instructive articles,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Frazer has tentatively suggested that the principal scene of the last struggle of "Buddhism" for its existence lay in the Dravidian country or South India. The Dravidians, whose national Deity was Śiva, stood badly in need, for reasons unspecified, of a theistic worship, which might unite them eventually into a people. But both "Jainism" and "Buddhism" miserably failed to satisfy the demand for a Deity so imperiously made.

Mr. Frazer's argument might perhaps be worked out to its logical conclusion in the following manner. The Jina-theory or the Bodhisattva-idea which the Jains or the Buddhists conceded fell short of the mark. For either of them, however modified or disguised, could hardly conceal its real character, as set forth in exalted moral attributes befitting only some human incarnations deified. The Brahmin doctrine of the incarnation had this advantage over both that it was *ab ovo* a corollary from the notion of a supreme Being who by his fancy or mercy rules equally the destinies of the universe and of human life. This may explain why such religions as Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism, which consisted of the worship of God, and such philosophies as those of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja, which afforded a rational ground for the theistic faith, flourished, while others fell gradually into obscurity.

In the light of such texts as the Rāmāyaṇa<sup>2</sup> and the Viṣṇu-purāṇa<sup>3</sup> we can further see that a time came when the tendency to brand the Cārvāka, Jaina (Arhata) and Buddhist (Saugata) philosophies with the flexible mark of nāstikya or Atheism asserted itself in a chronic form. Consider, for example, how quaint it is that one and the same "Delusion the Great" (Mahāmoha, apparently Buddha), respected in popular mythology as an Incarnation of Viṣṇu, is made the

<sup>1</sup> Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Sub voce Dravidians.

<sup>2</sup> Gorresio's Rāmāyaṇa, II. 109.

<sup>3</sup> Wilson's Viṣṇu Purāṇa, II. Chap. XVIII.

representative of three separate systems *viz.* Lokāyata, Jaina and Buddhist. This was in no way peculiar to the Viṣṇu-purāṇa, because another authority, the Rāmāyaṇa, which has been held in high esteem for its antiquity and intrinsic merit, furnishes a curious instance, where Rāma for nothing calumniates poor Buddha Tathāgata as a thievish atheist (coraḥ nāstikaḥ).

The historical manuals<sup>1</sup> of South India throw some light on the precise nature of the movement which was going on in the country since Bhaṭṭa Kumārila, and which resulted ultimately in the complete victory of Theism or Deism over the varying forms of Atheism. All of them exhibit a battle presenting several fronts, but always with the same result. Henceforward the fundamental conception of God—Śiva or its substitute, determined the character and popularity of philosophy. The remotest suggestion of a Deity was enough to commend a system to the acceptance of the people. The lowest in the scale is the cārvāka or Lokāyata philosophy, which so naïvely denies the existence of soul, future state and immortality. The next higher in the scale are placed the four schools of Buddhist philosophy—Mādhyamika, yogācāra, Sautrāntika, Vaibhāṣika—in their due order. Still higher is allowed to stand the Ārhata philosophy, being considered to be a transitional link between Atheism and Theism.

The Buddhist faith survived the crusade with which the incomparable Śaṅkara of Sir William Jones is credited, at least in those provinces where the victor's personal influence was least felt. It lingered, and lingers still in Bengal and Nepal (including Bhutan and Sikkim). As Mr. Hodgson points out, "the decline of this creed in the plains we must date from Śaṅkara's era, but not its fall, for it is now certain that the expulsion was not complete till the fourteenth or fifteenth century of our era."

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<sup>1</sup> Sarva-Siddhānta-Saṅgraha, ascribed to Śaṅkara; Śiva-jñāna-Siddhiyar by Meya-kaṇḍadeva, translated by Mr. Nallasami; Sarvadarśanasāṅgraha by Śāyana-Mādhava, translated by Cowell and Gough. Kumārila's commentary on the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā, and the commentaries on the Brahmaśūtra.

Interesting as it is, the history of the four schools of Buddhist philosophy in Nepal conclusively proves that the demands for Deity were a world-wide phenomenon, and that the Aisvarikas were those who alone pushed the Bodhisattva-idea to the extreme. The nearest approach that the Buddhists had ever made to Theism was in their curious conception of Ādibuddha.<sup>1</sup>

Swāmi Vivekānanda has truly said in his famous Chicago addresses, "On the philosophic side the disciples of the Great Master dashed themselves against the eternal rocks of the Vedas, and could not crush them, and on the other side they took away from the nation that eternal God to which every one, man or woman, clings so fondly. And the result was that Buddhism in India had to die a natural death."

The writers whose views are quoted and discussed above have sought to account for the decline of "Buddhism" as a religion, but not that of "Buddhism" as a philosophy. Their failure to separate the two problems, however inseparable they may be in fact, can well explain the incompleteness of their otherwise far-reaching investigations and conclusions. Professors Rhys Davids and Hackmann have emphasized the significance of "the changes that took place in the faith itself" or of "a hopeless inward decay", but neither their expressions nor the phases of change to which their reference is explicit seem to have anything to do with the problem of the development of thought, not only Buddhistic, but Indian. We can say, therefore, that they have not asked themselves at all how came it that the Buddhist philosophy was no longer able to hold its position, but had to give way before the advancing knowledge of the new era of speculation for which it had, in no small measure, prepared the way. There is none the less one indirect but very important suggestion in the obiter dicta

Separation of two problems: the so-called decline of "Buddhism" is but a change necessary for the development of Indian thought.

<sup>1</sup> By Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja also may be consulted.

Essays on the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet, pp. 12, 37.

of Prof. Rhys Davids, that the so-called decline of "Buddhism" in India ought to be viewed by the historian as a "process of change" rather than a "decay".<sup>1</sup>

To enumerate merely the causes or circumstances determining the rise and fall of "Buddhism as a religion" would be to grope one's way. Of course a writer on "Buddhism" is justified in speaking of its "decay" or "decline", in so far as he pursues his investigation of any single movement of thought, and that within the prescribed limits of place and time. The historian cannot satisfactorily discharge his functions otherwise by assuming and establishing that the "decay" or "decline" was no more than a link in a chain, a marked phase of the change that was necessary to the history of thought in general. The best way, then, of dealing with the problem to be solved would be to interpret the decline of "Buddhism" as merely a supersession by other systems that came forward to meet the demands of the new epoch, and were originally called forth into existence by the same laws of necessity. This is a fact which alone can decide once for all the value of enquiries concerning the evolution of Indian thought subsequent to the decadence of Buddhist philosophy, the study which is no less valuable than that of the development of pre-Buddhist thinking.

Supposing that South India was the place which witnessed the death-struggle of "Buddhism", and that the death-blow to it was struck by Śaṅkara towards the end of the 8th century or beginning of the 9th century, we must ask: was Śaṅkara's philosophy itself 'possible or intelligible' without reference to Buddhist philosophies, the Mādhyamika in particular, which flourished in South India? The question, as we are now persuaded, must be answered in the negative. It was not without some weighty reason that the Māyā-doctrine of Śaṅkara was stigmatised in the Padma Purāṇa as "Buddhism

Śaṅkara's relation to  
Buddhist philosophy.

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<sup>1</sup> Buddhist India, p. 320.

in disguise" (pracchanna bauddham eva). In the refutation of the dialectical scepticism of Mādhyamika philosophy lay the discovery of the philosophy of Śaṅkara.<sup>1</sup> The theses put forward by the Mādhyamikas aimed at most at invalidating all dogmatic pretensions.<sup>2</sup> But the Mādhyamikas, instead of giving a positive conception of reality, landed philosophy in the realm of universal void (Śūnya) or dilemma where nothing remained to fall back upon but empty concepts or ideas dressed with all manner of logical subtleties. It was a most embarrassing situation in which philosophy had ever found itself. Thus we see how necessity arose for supplementing the content of Mādhyamika philosophy with some sort of positive conceptions of reality. The task naturally fell upon Śaṅkara, whose was not only a doctrine of Māyā, but also that of Brahman. The transition from the doctrine of void (Śūnya-vāda) to that of Māyā-and-Brahman took place in a logical order, the which we might suppose to be paralleled in its fundamental character by the transition of Bradley's thought from his book on "Appearance" to that on 'Reality'. The two books are really complementary, representing together as they do a single work on 'Appearance and Reality'. The nature of the transition here contemplated may be brought out by means of Bradley's own words with which his book on Reality begins :—"The result of our first book (*i.e.* on Appearance) has been mainly negative. We have taken up a number of ways of regarding reality, and we have found that they all are vitiated by self-discrepancy. The reality can accept not one of these predicates at least in the character in which so far they have come. We certainly ended with a reflection which promised something positive.

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<sup>1</sup> Consult for the influence of the Mādhyamika system over Śaṅkara's Māyā-vāda "Vaiśeṣika philosophy" by H. Ui, p. 23, f. n. 2; de la vallee Poussin, Vedānta and Buddhism, J. R. A. S., 1910, pp. 129-40; Jacobi, on Māyāvāda, J. A. O. S., 1913, Vol. XXXIII, pp. 51-4; Walleser, Der altere Vedānta, Heidelberg, 1910. "Yat Śūnya-vādināṃ Śūnyaṃ Brahma Brahmanvādināṃ ca yat", Śarva-Vedānta Siddhānta, 980.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hegel's estimate of the effect and use of the Dialectical principle in its application to philosophical theories. The Logic of Hegel translated by Wallace, pp. 197-8.

Whatever is rejected as appearance is, for that very reason, no mere non-entity. It cannot bodily be shelved and merely got rid of, and therefore, since it must fall somewhere, it must belong to reality".<sup>1</sup>

The same question is to be repeated with regard to the interconnection and interdependence of other philosophical speculations and systems of India, including of course the Buddhist. Is Nāgasena's theory of rebirth, as expounded in the Milinda-pañho explicable except in relation to the Vajjiputtaka view of human personality (puggala-vāda) and Sāṅkiantika doctrine of transmigration, both of which preceded it? Can we realize the full significance of the nominalistic or conceptualistic philosophy of the Paññattivādins except as a protest against the "universal pessimism" of the Gokulikas, or Kukkulikas, and itself as a logical development from the vague poetical expressions of Sister Vajirā? In what manner did the Paññattivādins clear the road for the Andhakas, they for the Mādhyamikas, and the latter to some extent for the Naiyāyikas? What other rational explanation can we offer for Nāgasena's conception of time than that its origin can be clearly traced in the time-theory of the Sabbatthivādins, Kassapikas and of the Andhakas, and that it stands in close relation to the time-theory in the Maitri Upaniṣad as well as in the Yoga-system? How can we account for such development as the Nāma-rūpa-theory received from a few later thinkers like Nāgasena, Aśvaghoṣa, Buddhadatta and Buddhaghosa save as a fruitful result of an influence from outside? We need not multiply questions here. These problems await solution elsewhere. All that need be said is that the history of Buddhist philosophy means essentially this, that Buddhist speculations and systems stand in relations to other earlier, contemporary and subsequent Indian thoughts, as well as among themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> F. H. Bradley, "Appearance and Reality", 1893, p. 135.



It may appear most absurd that we have so far freely talked of "Buddhism" in its two aspects, without deciding the vitally important question as to the real character of its content. What is "Buddhism"? Is it a mere religion, or a mere philosophy, or both, or neither? Let us first pass in review the answers suggested by previous European scholars. We may conceive of three stages in the history of the study of "Buddhism" in Europe. In the first stage are the works of the early band of European scholars, such pioneers as Sir William Jones, Messrs. Colebrooke and Wilson, M. Burnouf, Prof. Lassen, Sir Edwin Arnold, and a few others, who had to draw their materials almost exclusively from the comparatively late legendary and poetical literature of the Buddhists, the older sources of information being for the most part inaccessible to them. While fully alive to the value of their services, and to the immensity of their labours, we must say that they all began their enquiry at the wrong end. The feature of "Buddhism" presented by those compositions at their disposal was that of a religion, an Indian faith bearing a close resemblance to Christianity. Buddha Gotama appeared to be the only son of India, an itinerant teacher surrounded by itinerant disciples, who by his mysterious birth, miracles, parables, ideals and personality stands nearest to Jesus of Nazareth. But the distinction between the two teachers of the continent of Asia was as sharply defined as that between "The light of Asia" and "The light of the world." This old-fashioned rune of Sir Edwin Arnold is still to be heard here and there. A revelation of superior kind is claimed for Jesus Christ as a Master who "spoke through the spirit", as distinguished from Buddha Gotama who "spoke through the mind".

The turning-point came when a fairly large number of translations in English of the sacred books of the East was published under the editorship of Prof. Max Müller, and when the Pali texts, containing a mine of information peculiarly their own, were rendered accessible to the general

body of inquirers, under the auspices of the Pali Text Society founded by Prof. Rhys Davids. Even while the greater bulk of Pali literature remained still buried in manuscript—Dr. Oldenberg produced his “Buddha,” which by its wealth of information and critical acumen, added to its fascinating style, will always command a foremost place among modern Buddhist classics. But Dr. Oldenberg who furnishes a connecting link between the old and the new arrived only at a negative conclusion, as he found<sup>1</sup> in “Buddhism” ‘neither the one nor the other’, *i. e.* neither a religion nor a philosophy.

The third stage, which has not as yet made much headway, may be said to date from Mrs. Rhys Davids who makes out a strong case for “Buddhism” by seeking to judge its value more as a philosophy than a religion. She repudiates the commonplace view that “Buddhism” is a mere code of Ethics, an ideal of life, though she does not deny that it is not stripped of a moral aspect, a standard of “solemn judgments about life and the whole of things”. It is to be confessed, however, that she is but a lucky reaper of the rich harvest sown by the pioneers in the field, notably Dr. Oldenberg, Dr. Jacobi, Dr. Rhys Davids and Mr. Shwe Zan Aung.

The followers of Buddha all agree, in one respect that they all have resorted to the teachings of Buddha as the final court of appeal, that they all have quoted him as the supreme dictator for the soundness of their method and the reasonableness of their conclusions, or that they all have held their points of view as being implicitly or explicitly reconciled with his. If our theory has any truth in it, the question whether “Buddhism” is a religion, a code of ethics, or an abstruse metaphysics becomes reducible at last to this form: What was Buddha? Was he a mere social and religious reformer like Rājā Rām Mohan Roy, a teacher of morals and statecraft like Cāṇakya, or a

What was Buddha, a religious reformer, a trickster, or a philosopher?

<sup>1</sup> “Buddha” translated by Mr. Hoey, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> “Buddhism”, p. 35: Buddhist Psychology, pp. 1-2.

daring speculator like Yājñavalkya? This is not so easy a problem as may appear at first sight. It is on the contrary one of those fundamental problems on the solution of which depends the possibility or impossibility of a history of Buddhist philosophy, worth the name. And one cannot rest content until the contents of the whole of Piṭaka literature have been judged in their organic relations as well as in the light of the later development of Buddhist thinking. The categorical imperative of research demands that before embarking upon the study of "Buddhism", one should unlearn all the misconceptions that this prejudiced age has circulated broadcast.

In the absence of a first-hand knowledge of the Buddhist texts one may profit to some extent by the judgments of those who by their earnestness and prolonged studies have acquired rights to command attention. One of them, Mrs. Rhys Davids, esteems Buddha Gotama as "a notable milestone in the history of human ideas", "a man reckoned for ages by thousands as the Light not of Asia only, but of the world", "a teacher in whose doctrine ranked universal causality supreme as a point of view, and a sound method".

Bold as her position is, it stands diametrically opposed to that of other writers in whose estimation Buddha is neither a religious reformer nor a philosopher, and for whom the great value of the study of "Buddhism" arises mainly from a communion with the stupendous personality of Buddha that it unmistakably reveals.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Oldenberg has to admit that "hundreds of years before Buddha's time movements were in progress in Indian thought which prepared the way for Buddhism and which cannot be separated from a sketch of the latter."<sup>3</sup> But it is apparent from the general tenor of his argument that his motive is to prove not that Buddha is a great landmark in the evolution of human thought, but that so much had been done and achieved in the arena of Indian religion and philosophy before him that he had hardly had

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<sup>1</sup> Buddhism, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> Deussen, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Berlin, 1907, 34-8.

<sup>3</sup> Buddha, p. 6.

anything to say new. His striking personality is held out as an axiomatic truth. But it is one thing to say that Buddha was a good old man, and quite another that he contemplated the universe and human life in his own way.

We have already indicated above what should be our line of answer regarding the foregoing enquiry as to whether Buddha was a teacher of religion or a philosopher.

The author of a religion he undoubtedly was, but it must be understood that his religion was rather an accidental, secondary feature, an outgrowth of his philosophy, when the latter was required to yield an ideal of life, employed as a mode of prevision and self-realisation of the highest spiritual side of our being which lies far above the experience of the senses and normal human cognition,<sup>1</sup> and made to serve as an unfailing guide to reasoned faith (*paññānvayā saddhā*),<sup>2</sup> an inner attitude of reverence and good will towards the whole of things expressed in the gentleness of human action,<sup>3</sup> a consciousness of the dignity of self cognisant of dignity in others.<sup>4</sup>

The question of realisation was pressed by him generally in connexion with the infinite, golden *Brahmaloka* realised in thought (*jñānamaya tapa*) by previous thinkers and ideally deduced for ethical purpose from their inner perception or intuition (*pratibodha, cetas*) of the unity of *Ātman* or absolute self-consciousness. Whenever he was referred to grand

He was the author of a religion. In what sense and how?

Buddha in his religious aspirations tried to realise the grand truth of the philosophy of the Upaniṣads.

<sup>1</sup> See the description of the *Jhāna* modes and stages preliminary to the realisation of *Nirvāṇa* commonly met with throughout Buddhist literature.

<sup>2</sup> The passage quoted in the *Atthasālinī*, P. T. S., p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> The gentleness of human action here thought of must be understood in its twofold aspect. In its purely subjective character, it finds its expression through good will (*prayer* in the sense of Coleridge), compassion, sympathetic appreciation and equanimity (*mettā-karuṇā-muditā-upekkhā*). Its outward expressions include politeness, good manners, cleanliness of habits, and the like. The pursuit of the higher ideals of life does not demand that we should pass stolidly on, when we are politely asked to accept alms (see Buddha's criticism of some rude ascetic practices, *Dial. B. II. pp. 223-40*).

<sup>4</sup> Even a menial at a royal household begins to feel one day or another; "Strange is it and wonderful,.....this result of merit! Here is this king of Magadha, *Ajātasattu*, the son of the Videha princess—he is a man, and so am I. But the king lives in the full enjoyment and possession of the five pleasures of sense and here am I a slave, wo king for him, rising before him and retiring earlier to rest" (*Dial. B. II. p. 76; D. N. I. p. 60*). Buddha recognised divine spark flashing even in the hardened soul of a highway robber like *Aṅgulimāla*.

philosophical theories of old, he impatiently broke forth in utterances reminding us at once of a modern saying, "Please do not boast that the jackfruit belonging to your uncle's orchard is delicious, but say first of all whether really you have tasted one." In the *Tevijja sutta* the young Brahmin *Vāsetṭha* (*Vasiṣṭha*) is represented as saying to Buddha, "The various Brahmins, Gotama, teach various paths. The *Addhariyā* Brahmins, the *Tittiriya* Brahmins, the *Chandokā* Brahmins (the *Chandavā* Brahmins), the *Bavharijā* Brahmins. Are all those saving paths? Are they all paths which will lead him, who acts according to them, into a state of union with *Brahmā*?" "Just *Vāsetṭha*," Buddha replied, "as if a man should say, How I long for, how I love the most beautiful woman in this land! And people should ask him, Well! good friend! .....do you know (who and what she is), .....he should answer—No.....Would it not turn out, that being so, that the talk of that man was foolish talk?"<sup>1</sup>

Referring to the current doctrine that all finite concrete existents with their different names corresponding to their special forms lose their identity while merged in the unity of self, as illustrated by the familiar metaphor of the flowing rivers and the ocean,<sup>2</sup> Buddha congratulated himself more than once upon his success in organising a Brotherhood on the model of the ultimate reality brooking no distinction whatsoever by way of caste, family and the like.<sup>3</sup> One might observe that the same religious consciousness or principle underlies the order of *Caitanya*, one of the most typical of modern religions, which, like its Buddhist predecessor, does not tolerate the tyranny of caste, class, or any such social convention. We might go so far as to maintain that all *Śrāmanic* types of religion, as distinguished from *Brāhmanic*, agree in this respect, that they all reject, at least theoretically, caste, class and *samskāra* as constituting a natural basis of

Ancient and Modern  
religions of India  
compared.

<sup>1</sup> Dial. B. II. pp. 303-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Chāndogya Upanisad*, VI. 10; *Muṇḍaka Upanisad*, III. 8. etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, IV, 198-9.

distinction of man from man. Thus we can conceive the Śrāmanic types of religion as a continuous development. There is throughout uniformity in the course of religious evolution. But it must be remembered that similarity obtained does not amount to identity. The differences in places are so fundamental that the historian must at once reject Matthew Arnold's doctrine of an unchanging East as categorically false. For there are overwhelming facts to prove that even where the effects are same or similar, the causes, standpoints, motives and methods are at variance. Whereas in ancient religions we find efforts towards realising robust, manly philosophy, the modern religions seek only to realise Pauranic fiction and effeminate poetry. For instance, while "Buddhism" in its religious aspirations tried to realise the philosophy of the Upaniṣads, the Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal is an effort to realise the devotional teachings of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. There was a marked distinction between religious order and civic society in ancient religions, whereas in the modern these do not stand apart, but are almost blended into a single system. Widely divergent in their development as the religions of past and present may seem, their continuity has never been broken. For the several lines of growth have converged to a point, only to diverge again in two main directions.

This point, which is the connecting link in the chain of past and present is the teaching of the Bhagavadgītā and the main courses of the divergence are towards Nyāya (Dialectic) and Bhakti (Devotion), the latter being a reaction against the subtlety of the former.

The foregoing observation has made it plain, that impelled by a necessity of more or less subjective character Buddha organised a Brotherhood. In connexion with it his views, at least some of them, underwent a process of modification, nay, contradicted themselves, as would naturally be the case when logical consistency has to conform to the Paradox called life. The Brotherhood brought him into close contact with the busy and blind world of mankind from which he kept himself

The development of  
Buddhism as a practical  
or popular religion.

aloof for a long time. In order to win over the people to your way of thinking you must partly accede to their wishes and in a country where mentality of the people is so very varied you must narrow the border-line between your deepest convictions and the current beliefs down to its utmost limit. Buddha Gotama, however enlightened he might be, had to pursue this policy. The result was that a new standpoint—Lokiya, sammuti or Practical, supervened, compelling him to throw antithesis between it and the Lokuttara, Paramattha or transcendental standpoint into clear relief.

The history of the Saṃgha shows that at the start there were no formulated rules or laws of any kind. The first band of his disciples was recruited without any sort of formality. The persuasive call of “ehi” (come ye) was enough for ordaining a disciple. If we look forward, a curious coincidence is presented by the history of Christianity. But as the Brotherhood grew into a regular society of men, the question of discipline became paramount. The rules, laws, formalities, conventions from which he recoiled in theory, followed one another in uniform succession until a complete code, the Pātimokkha, came into existence. The conflicting interests of the Saṃgha gave rise to so many complications that he had no other alternative than to accord religious sanction to this body of rules, which was primarily intended for the use and guidance of the Bhikkhus and Bhikkṣunis.

In theory he was not prepared to admit seniority by age, and in fact he plainly told the wanderer Sabhiya that seniority went by wisdom only,<sup>1</sup> but in practice he had to introduce seniority by age, however different was the method of calculation.

As among the ordinary people the ethical definition of a Brāhmin served as a hiding cloak for the physical definition, universally followed in practice, so as to a Bhikkṣu. Under the glamour of an ideal definition of the Aryan Saṃgha—an indefinite whole, any wearer of the robe passed for a Bhikkṣu.

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<sup>1</sup> Sabhiya-sutta, Sutta-nipāta.

Thus in opposing the caste-system favoured and justified by Brāhmanism he came really to replace it by another, a spiritual caste, so to speak, claiming honour from a reigning king for a Bhikṣu who was a while ago a slave in the royal household.<sup>1</sup> Religious sanction was accorded also to some social practices partly for the maintenance of the order. For except the liberal gifts of the faithful the Saṅgha had no other means of support.

The practice of offering food to departed spirits was justified,<sup>2</sup> if not encouraged, though from the transcendental point of view he steered clear of the problem of a future state.<sup>3</sup> We can imagine that when a Cynic like the chieftain Pāyāsi seriously questioned the possibility of individual existence after death, a "flower-talker" (citra-kathī) like Kumāra Kassapa tried to convince him, at least to throw dust into his eyes, by relating fairy tales one after another. When you ask a person who is innocent of philosophy to adduce proofs for the persistence of soul after death, what else will he, or can he do than telling you all sorts of ghost-stories? We have in fact a complete anthology of such stories, the Peta-and-Vimānavatthu. Indeed, the dialogue between Pāyāsi and Kumāra Kassapa in the Dīgha-nikāya is of a great historical value as indicating the process which led in course of time to the composition of the Birth-stories of Buddha, the geneology of the Buddhas, and the ghost-stories of other people. The Bodhisattva-idea which is so widely prevalent among the Buddhists was but a corollary, a slight modification of the doctrine of rebirth. The principal motive to the development of the Bodhisattva-idea was perhaps furnished by the Bhikṣus of theological turn of mind, who were unwilling to credit any one but Buddha for his Bodhi-knowledge, and at the same time too clever to commit themselves to the theory of chance-becoming. As they fondly believed, the Bodhi-knowledge realised itself in and through the accumulated wisdom of a single striving self

<sup>1</sup> Dial B. II. pp. 76-7.

<sup>2</sup> Tirokuḍḍa-Sutta, Khuddaka Pāṭha, Petavatthu.

<sup>3</sup> Majjhima, I, p. 8.



The Apadāna, the Cariyā-piṭaka and the Buddhavaṃsa were obviously the results of such an after-thought on the part of the Buddhist theologians. At any rate, Buddhaghosa informs us that these were precluded from the list of canonical texts by the Dīgha-bhāṇakas of old<sup>1</sup>. The doctrine of karma developed in all these texts, particularly in the Jātaka literature, is hardly distinguishable from popular fatalism so sharply criticized by Buddha himself under Pubbekatahetu.<sup>2</sup> There were other factors contributing to the development of "Buddhism" as a religion. There were many among his disciples, not excluding Sāriputta, who were unable to resist the temptation to lavish extravagant praises upon him, though one might agree that their praises were at bottom but expressions of gratitude. There were the Brahmin teachers who on the application of the physiognomical test of a great man took him for no less than an Incarnation. There were again the people who looked upon him as a very God who might procure for them the joys of heaven by his grace, and bring down the hosts of angels to their rescue by his lordly call. The ascetic disdain of marriage and of the animal phenomena that are inherent in it probably led his followers to believe in his "chance-birth". There were of course action and reaction of several other causes all of which we may suppose helped forward the process of deification.

It was no part of our plan to institute an enquiry into the evolution of "Buddhism" as a religion. But we launched upon it with the object of showing that in whatever manner and in whatever sense Buddha became the founder of a religion, it is undeniable that he was a philosopher.

Philosophy was the starting point and foundation of "Buddhism":—Proofs.

Granted that his religion, like other ancient religions of India, was essentially an attempt to mould human life after the fashion of reality, it follows that the conception of the ideal of life itself depended on the determination of the nature of

<sup>1</sup> Sumaṅgala-Vilāsinī, I, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Aṅguttara-nikāya, iii, 61. 1.

reality.<sup>1</sup> In other words, philosophy was the presupposition of his religion. Now we shall briefly examine evidence pointing this way.

(1) A time-honoured tradition<sup>2</sup> bears out the fact that the philosophy was the starting point and foundation of his teaching. It tells us that the first expression of his enlightenment contained but an enunciation and emphatic assertion of the law of happening by way of cause (*Paṭicca-samuppāda*), the causal genesis of things and ideas, that is to say, causation both natural and logical.

(2) The central, fundamental conception of his system was the law of causation. "Leave aside", he said to Sakulūdayi, a wanderer who had leaning to Jaina philosophy, "leave aside these questions of the beginning and the end. I will instruct you in the Law: If that is, this comes to be; on the springing up of that, this springs up. If that is not, this does not come to be; on the cessation of that, this ceases."<sup>3</sup>

We have nothing to add to the comment of Mrs. Rhys Davids on this point. "Now in this connection," she observes, "I find a salient feature in Buddhist philosophy, namely: In place of theories on this or that agency as constituting the source, the informing, sustaining principle, and the end of this present order called world or universe, Buddhists concentrated their attention on the order of things itself. This order they conceived as a multitudinous and continual coming-to-be and passing-away in every thing. And this

<sup>1</sup> In this sense religion may be regarded as the art of imitating nature—the art of the Divine. Vide for such a definition of art the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VI, 30. I.

<sup>2</sup> *Vinaya-Piṭaka*, I, pp. 1-2; *Udānam*, p. I. *Jātaka*, I. 76; *Atthasālinī*, p. 17; *Sumaṅgala-Vilāsinī*, I, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> *Majjhima-nikāya*, II. 32: "Imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti; imas' uppāda-idaṃ uppajjati; jmasmiṃ asati idaṃ na hoti; imassa nirodha idaṃ nirujjhati". cp. *Sthānaṅga* (ed. Dhanapati), pp. 309-10.

"Athavā he-u catuvvihe paṇṇatte; taṃ jahā:  
atthi taṃ atthi so he-u atthi taṃ  
n'atthi so he-u natthi taṃ atthi so,  
he-u natthi taṃ natthi so he-u."

"This is, because that is. This is not, because that is. This is, because that is not. This is not, because that is not." *Vidyabhūsan*, *Indian Logic*, p. 5.

constant transition, change or becoming was not capricious, nor pre-ordained, but went on by way of natural causation".<sup>1</sup>

(3) Dr. Oldenberg's argument that "hundreds of years before Buddha's time movements were in progress in Indian thought which prepared the way for Buddhism and which cannot be separated from a sketch of the latter" cannot certainly be held as a decisive proof against Buddha being a notable milestone in the history of human ideas. For it was by these progressive movements in Indian speculation that such a developed and comprehensive theory of causation as Buddha's became possible. We might here call to our aid Mr. Herbert Spencer whose pregnant words and pointed remarks can help us in realising what a long history of philosophical thinking is presupposed by development of the idea of causation. "Intellectual progress", he maintains, "is by no one trait so adequately characterised, as by development of the idea of causation: since development of this idea involves development of so many other ideas. Before any way can be made, thought and language must have advanced far enough to render properties or attributes thinkable as such, apart from objects; while in low stages of human intelligence, they are not. Again, even the simplest notion of cause, as we understand it, can be reached only after many like instances have been grouped into a simple generalisation; and through all ascending steps, higher notions of causation imply wider notions of generality".<sup>2</sup>

(4) A systematic study of Pre-Buddhistic thought in India is full of possibilities. One of the most fruitful results of it will no doubt be this, that it will enable us to retrace almost each step in the dubious course of philosophical speculation from its rude beginning to its mature growth, particularly in regard to development of the idea of causation. It will lay

Oldenberg's views on  
Buddhism, and  
Spencer's views on  
development of the  
idea of causation.

Development of the  
idea of causation in  
Indian thought.

<sup>1</sup> Buddhism, pp. 78-9; cf. p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> The Data of Ethics, chap. IV. p. 46.

bare the intricate path of gradual evolution of the notion of cause in the light of a fairly continuous record such as represented by Indian literature. It will show, *inter alia*, that in India, as everywhere else, scientific reflections arose, or could arise, only after accumulated daily experiences of mankind had adequately brought home the notion of the uniformity of natural sequence in the universe, which appeared to the primitive observer to be full of awe-inspiring wonders and perplexing anomalies. The world or universe is a system, where the place and function of each power or force are determined by certain definite laws, a rational order of things, a harmonious whole, within the four walls of which chance, anarchy or autocracy has no place. This is one of the permanent contributions made by Vedic Kavis to philosophy. Their expression *Ritā*, which frequently occurs in Vedic hymns and was replaced later by *Dharma*, is significant in more than one way.

For it implies not only that the visible universe is governed throughout by the principle of law in the widest sense of the term, but also that there is a rhythmic, orderly march of things in general. The morning showed the day. At the very dawn of human intelligence the far-sighted Vedic Poets went into camps, some maintaining the Postulate of Being,<sup>1</sup> and others, that of non-Being.<sup>2</sup> Both schools have left their foot-prints on later Indian speculations. Speaking generally, the history of subsequent Indian philosophy has nothing more to exhibit than a gradual unfolding and expansion, a wider application, and a continually changing connotation of the ancient antithesis between the two postulates.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sat-kārya-vāda implied in *Ṛig-veda*. X.129.1:—*nāsad āsīn na sad āsīn tadānīm*.

<sup>2</sup> A-sat-kārya-vāda implied in *ibid*, X.72.2: *asato sad ajāyata*.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. the antithesis between *Bhūti* and *Abhūti*, *Aitareya Āraṇyaka*, II. 1.8.6-7;

Tyam is from Sat, *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*, 1.3; *Katham asataḥ sajjāyeta?* *satteva somya idam agra āsīt* (*chāndogya up*, VI.1.2); *nā sato vidyate bhāvo, nābhāvo vidyate sato*, *Bhagavad Gītā*, II (the verse is apparently missing from the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II); *Pakudha Kaccāyana's* postulate: *no-e uppajja-e asuṃ*=nothing comes out of nothing; *sato naçchi viṇāso, asato naçchi saṃbhavo*=what is, does not perish; from nothing comes nothing as distinguished from *Pūraṇa Kassapa's akāraṇa-vāda* (*Sūtra-Kṛitāṅga*, I. 1.1.16; II. 1.22; Buddha's *paṭiccasamuppāda* as contrasted with *adhiccasamuppāda*; *ahutvā ahesuṃ*, *Dīgha-N.*, I, p.; etc. *Saccāsato hyanutpādaḥ Sāṃkhya-Vaiśeṣikāḥ smṛitāḥ, Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra*, ed. Vidyabhusan, Fasc. II, p. 116. See also pp. 104-5.

In Post-Vedic thinking; generally known as the Philosophy of the Upaniṣads, we are made familiar to the fundamental notion of causation, or sequence as we now understand it: every shoot (Tūla, effect) has a root (mūla, cause), the shoot being identical with the root in substance or essence.<sup>1</sup> But it may be said without slightest injustice to them, that they show zeal rather for a knowledge of the cause of causes than a rational explanation of things, ideas and their relations in the light of a cause, as constituted by several conditions, (paccaya-sāmaggi or samavāya) both positive and negative. At no other period of Indian history was validity of the theory of causation, particularly in regard to the moral ideas of good, evil, responsibility and freedom, so openly questioned and so strongly defended as at the period of the Sophists and Mahāvīra which elapsed immediately before the advent of Buddha.<sup>2</sup> The Sophists, in spite of their comparative poverty in creative thought, rendered an invaluable service to Indian philosophy. They by their sophistry created a demand in it for a thorough, dialectical criticism of knowledge and Being.<sup>3</sup> And with the single exception of Mahāvīra there is no other philosopher among Buddha's predecessors who, like him, so extensively employed causation both as a norm and as a method. For Buddha not merely things, but ideas themselves are related and caused,<sup>4</sup> and therefore capable of a rational explanation; the world is not merely a physical or an intellectual order, as contemplated by the ancients, but a moral as well as a logical order.

One must not run away with the idea that Buddha's achievement began and ended with enunciation of a theory of causal genesis. The truth of this remark may be corroborated by the following enquiry. The underlying principle of his theory of causal genesis has a twofold bearing : logical

The two-fold bearing of Buddha's theory of causal genesis: Logical and Metaphysical. The principle of identity.

<sup>1</sup> Aitareya Āraṇyaka, II. 1.8-1; Chāndogya up. VI.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Rhys Davids, Buddhism, pp. 79-89.

<sup>3</sup> H. Ui, Vaiśeṣika Philosophy, Introduction.

<sup>4</sup> Dial. B. II. p. 252; "It is from this or that cause that knowledge has arisen to me."

and metaphysical. As a logical principle, it is no other than what we now call the principle of identity, the great value of which was recognised by him in the sphere of thought. Being is, non-Being is not. That which is, is ; that which is not, is not. In order to think correctly and consistently, we have to think as A is A, or as A is not not-A. Thus Buddha asked Citta, a lay adherent of Potṭhapāda the Wanderer, "If people should enquire of you, Were you in the past, or not ? Will you be in the future, or not ? Are you now, or not ? What would your reply be to them ?"

"My reply would be that I was in the past, and not that I was not ; that I shall be in the future, and not that I shall not be ; that I am now, and not that I am not."

"Then if they cross-examined you thus : Well ! the past individuality that you had, is that real to you, and the future individuality and the present unreal ? And so as to the future individuality that you will have and the individuality that you have now ? How would you answer ?"

"I should say that the past individuality that I had was real to me at the time when I had it, and others unreal ; and so as to the other two cases."

"Just so, Citta."<sup>1</sup>

In the same vein he said elsewhere, "Three are the modes of speech, the forms of judgment, the rules of nomenclature, which are not confused now, which were not confused in the past, which are not disputed, which will not be disputed, and which are not condemned by the wise philosophers. What are these ?

That which has passed away, ceased, completely changed, is to be designated, termed, judged as 'something that was', and neither as 'something that is', nor as 'something that will be', and so on.

There were among the ancients some Ukkalāvassabhañña, vaunting, mischievous theorists who denied causation, denied the ultimate ground of moral distinctions, denied the

<sup>1</sup> op. Dial. B. II, pp. 262-63.

persistence of individuality after death. They, too, did not disregard these three modes of speech, the forms of judgment, the rules of nomenclature, which are by their nature indisputable and unimpeachable. And why not? In fear that they might otherwise bring upon them censure and discredit.<sup>1</sup>

The metaphysical bearing of the principle under discussion

The theory of causal genesis in its metaphysical aspect teaches that reality is a continuous process of change from cause to effect.

goes at once to prove that Buddha was no mere logician. He was a philosopher endowed with keen insight into the nature of reality, which is change, movement, transformation, continual becoming, a change which does not however consist of disconnected events or isolated freaks of nature, as current abstract terms may generally signify, but one that presents throughout a continuous structure, a closed series of forms,<sup>2</sup> a concatenation of causes and effects. Not that the cause is identical with the effect, as contemplated by Uddālaka Āruṇi; with Buddha the former constitutes but an invariable antecedent condition for the becoming of the latter: If that is, this comes-to-be; on the arising of that, this arises. To be consistent with his general principle, that Being follows from Being, Uddālaka could not help coming to the conclusion, that there is no new creation.<sup>3</sup> Milk really does not change to curds, the latter just comes out of the former. Causality holds good only in so far as the former contains in it the seed, essence or potentiality of the latter, the reality being from an empirical point of view (saṃvṛitti) a system where the whole of nature gradually unfolds itself by means of a churning motion (manthana), stirred up by soul, the principle of all change.

<sup>1</sup>. Saṃyutta-N., III. pp. 71-3: "Tayo ime niruttipathā adhivacanapathā paññattipathā asaṃkiṇṇā ... .. samapehi brāhmaṇehi viññūhi. ... .. ye pi te ahesuṃ ukkalvasabbhaññā ahetuvāda akiriyaṇāda natthikavāda te pi ime tayo ... .. pathā ... .. na amaññimsu. Taṃ kissa hetu? nindāvyārośaupārambha-bhaya".

<sup>2</sup> cf. Mrs. Rhys Davids, Buddhism, pp. 143-5, which shows that her conclusion rests on a much later authority such as the Milinda.

<sup>3</sup>. Vide Śaṅkara's learned disquisition on this point. His commentary on the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, VI. 2. 1.

Buddha employed Uddālaka's simile of the milk and the curds as an illustration of the nature of reality, as he conceived it. But like his predecessor, he did not imply by it that there is altogether no new creation or transition from cause to effect. As he put it on the other hand, "Just as from milk comes curds, from curds butter, from butter ghee, from ghee junket ; but when it is milk it is not called curds, or butter, or ghee or junket ; and when it is curds it is not called by any of the other names ; and so on".<sup>1</sup>

Turning at last to the main question as to the conception of three selves<sup>2</sup> of the ancients, Buddha tried to guard against a possible misunderstanding. These selves came to be treated of in some circles as if they were three separate entities or self-subsistent principles. He pointed out clearly and definitely that considered in isolation, the gross, material or animal self, the rational or thinking self, or the nōetic or spiritual self was a mere abstraction, there being no impassable barrier, in fact, between one self and another. "When any one of the three modes of personality is going on, it is not called by the name of the other. For these, Citta, are merely names, expressions, turns of speech, designations in common use in the world. And of these I, too, make use indeed, but am not led astray by them".<sup>3</sup>

We have considered the main line of evidence proving beyond doubt that Buddha was endowed with a true philosophical insight into the nature of things. Like a prophet<sup>4</sup> or a poet<sup>5</sup> he did not build castles in the air. He did not, for example, look forward to a day of ideal perfection, when all signs of cruelty, oppression and high handedness would vanish from the phantasmagoria of nature. For he knew too well

<sup>1</sup> Dial B. II., p. 263 ; Cp. Mrs. Rhys Davids, Buddhism, p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> Oḷārika (sthūla) attā-paṭilābho, manomaya, saññāmaya, the first corresponding to Śārirāḥ (annamaya and prāṇamaya ātmā), the second to manomaya ātmā, and the third to Vijñānamaya and ānandamaya (vide Taṭṭhira Up. II ; Dial B. p. 253).

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Dial B. II ; p. 263.

<sup>4</sup> E. G., Isaiah.

<sup>5</sup> E. G. Ramā-i Pandit.



that the time will never come when the tiger and the buffalo, or the snake and the mungoose will drink at the same fountain or live in concord for ever. He also was aware that the pious hope cherished by a Nigaṇṭha or Jaina of being able to avoid taking life altogether was never to be fulfilled. Even in moving about a man is bound, he said, to destroy innumerable lives.<sup>1</sup> He was fully alive indeed to manifold limitations of human knowledge and life. Now before closing our present discussion, let us consider for a moment another line of evidence, which, circumstantial though it is, may give us a new perspective.

(1) If we look at the time, country and surroundings in which Buddha had seen the light of day, we cannot but presume that he was a philosopher in the truest sense of the word. As we all know, he was born at a time when Sophistic activities were in full swing, the whole of Northern India seething with speculative ferment. Hundreds and thousands of wandering teachers spent their time in discussing "with loud voices, with shouts and tumult" all sorts of topics, which embraced matters relating to philosophy, ethics, morals and polity.<sup>2</sup> There were friendly interviews, and politeness and exchange of greetings and compliments. There was at the same time an interchange of wrangling phrases in the heat of discussions: "You don't understand this doctrine and discipline, I do. How should you know about this doctrine and discipline?" And so on. Among these Wanderers (Parivrājakas), there were far-famed leaders of sects and eminent founders of schools, who were "clever, subtle, experienced in controversy, hair-spitters," who went about, one would think, "breaking into pieces by their wisdom the speculations of their adversaries". With reference to them Buddha expressed to a naked asectic, "as between them and me there is, as to some

The circumstantial evidence, taken from the prevailing education of the time and contemporary judgment, proves that Buddha was a philosopher.

<sup>1</sup> Majjhima-Nikāya, I., 377.

<sup>2</sup> B. C. Law's short Account of the Wandering Teachers at the time of the Buddha, J. A. S. B., Vol. XIV, 1918, No. 7, pp. 399-406.

points, agreement, and as to some points, not. As to some of those things they approve we also approve thereof. As to some of those things they disapprove, we also disapprove thereof." Some of those profoundly learned Sophists bear evidence to the fact that Buddha was a philosopher of no mean order, an upholder of the supremacy of wisdom (*ñāṇavādo*), a teacher, who followed the Socratic method of questioning and cross-questioning his interlocutor in order to bring the latter round to his way of thinking. One of them, for instance, curtly remarked, "I don't think it proper that the householder Upāli should join an issue with Samāṇa Gotama ; for he is, sir, a juggler indeed, who knows the art of confounding the disciples of other teachers."<sup>1</sup>

(2) At the time of the advent of Buddha India was a country where every shade of opinion was maintained, and nobody could say what exactly he was about at two consecutive hours. Buddha came to the rescue of Indian philosophy at such a critical moment of its life. He set himself like his worthy forerunner Mahāvira to prepare a 'Perfect net' (*Brahmajāla*) of dialectics for entangling in it all sorts of 'sophistry' and 'eel-wriggling.'<sup>2</sup> It will be a great mistake to deny him the name of a philosopher on the ground that he dismissed a certain number of problems from the domain of speculations. It is not however wholly true that he discarded or undervalued them altogether. When he said that he suspended his judgments on this or that ontological problem, he really meant us to understand that no one answer (*ekamsika*) can be judged as adequate for the purpose. As these problems relate to 'matters of fact' (*lokiyadhammā*), the best thing for us would be to approach each of them from more than one point of view, from several (*anekamsika*).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Majjhima-Nikāya*, I., 375 : "Na kho mētam bhante ruccati yaṃ Upāli gahapati samāṇassa Gotamassa vādam āropeyya ; samaṇo hi bhante Gotamo māyāvi, āvaṭṭanīṃ māyaṃ jānāti yāya aññatitthiyānaṃ sāvake āvaṭṭeti"

<sup>2</sup> *Dial. B. II.* p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> *Dīgha-N.*, I. 187-8. The force of the antithesis implied between the two terms *ekamsika* and *anekamsika* is not at all clear from the rendering of Dr. Rhys Davids, *Dial. B. II.* pp. 254-5.

And judging from different standpoints the Eternalist and the Annihilationist can both be proved to be right as well as wrong.<sup>1</sup>

So far as he tended to withhold his judgments on this or that problem of Metaphysics, and craved for mental imperturbability by preserving a neutral attitude towards this or that dogmatic view, to that extent he was an Eel-wriggling,-prevaricating sceptic or Agnostic.<sup>2</sup> So far as he conceded that something could be said both for and against any dogmatic view, to that extent he was a 'Paralogist' (Syādvādin).<sup>3</sup> And so far as he clearly and precisely pointed out the standpoints looking from which the dogmatist position could be both defended and overthrown, to that extent he was a Critical philosopher (vibhajjavādin).<sup>4</sup>

(3) The Brahmins of old passed him for no less than an Incarnation of God, one who could stand the physiognomical test of a great man. The medieval myths represent him as a fullfledged Incarnation, whose principal and only message to the world was *negatively* non-injury to life, and *positively* compassion. Unfortunately this belief is still very widely prevalent in this country. This fate was anticipated by him, when he expressly said, "It is in connexion with trivialities, matters of little value, mere moral behaviour, that a man-in-the-street will praise me, if he so desires." "There are other things, profound, difficult to realise, hard to understand, tranquillising, sweet, not to be grasped by mere logic, 'subtle,' comprehensible only by the wise in respect of which that one might rightly praise me in accordance with truth."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Saṃyutta-N., II. p. 17 ; III. p. 135. Mrs. Rhys Davids, Buddhism, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Dial. B. II, pp. 37-41.

<sup>3</sup> Jacobi, Jaina Sūtras II. pp. 405-6, f. n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Saṃyutta-N. II. p. 17 ; III. p. 135 ; Dial B. II, pp. 26-49.

<sup>5</sup> cp. Dial. B. II, pp. 3-26.

Buddhist philosophy is not only an integral part of a whole, but a whole in itself. If so, the question arises, how can we distinguish this particular movement as a whole from other Indian movements with which it is correlated? It is

The two tests of Buddhist philosophy. remarkable that this question of supreme importance did not escape the notice of ancient Buddhist writers. We shall be content here with commenting on just two tests provided by them.

1. In the first place, we read in the *Netti* that the Heretics and Hedonists of other schools,<sup>1</sup> so far as their philosophical speculations were concerned, judged things and their relations from the point of view of *attā* or "a permanent somewhat," and the result was that they committed themselves to either of these two extremes: Eternalism and Annihilationism.<sup>2</sup> According to the *Petaṅkopadesa*, the two extremes on the moral side were these: that pleasure and pain are willed by the moral agent, and that these are determined by other causes.<sup>3</sup> On the practical side, too, their position was in no way better. They advocated either enjoyment of the pleasures of the sense or practice of self-mortification.<sup>4</sup> As distinguished from them, the Buddhist Heretics and Hedonists,<sup>5</sup> in spite of their divergences, agreed in so far as they all entertained a high regard for Buddha, his teachings, and methods of self-culture.<sup>6</sup>

Thus the *Netti* and *Petaṅkopadesa*, the two works ascribed to Mahākaccāyana, bring out, among other things, first, that all Buddhist teachers were, as a rule, upholders of the Middle-path in matters of theory and practice (to use a vulgar expression): and secondly, that they all based their opinion on the teachings of the Buddha. The second point deserves special notice. The *Kathāvatthu* which embodies the views

<sup>1</sup> *Diṭṭhicaritā*, *Taṇhācaritā*, ito bahiddhā pabbajitā.

<sup>2</sup> *Sassata-uccheda diṭṭhi*.

<sup>3</sup> *Saṃsāra-kāmaṇi, paraṃkāmaṇi*.

<sup>4</sup> *Kāmesu kāmasukhallikānuyogo, attā-kilamathānuyogo*.

<sup>5</sup> *Asmiṃ sāsane pabbajitā*.

<sup>6</sup> The *Netti*, *Nayasamuṭṭhāna*, p. 112.

of various schools of Buddhist philosophy bears it out. The Buddhist teachers have freely and frankly cited the discourses of Buddha (*sutta-udāharana*) as a final authority in favour of their conclusions, so much so that these contending schools of opinion can be historically viewed as so many different modes of interpretation of Buddha's system. Indeed, Mahākaccāyana had to confess that his task was mainly to make explicit what is implicit in the words of another.<sup>1</sup>

2. As regards the second test, it is stated in the *Lankāvatāra-sūtra* that although the epithets or predicates of Brahman and Nirvāṇa were for the most part same or similar, it would be a great mistake to identify the two conceptions. These were far from being identical. In order to understand truly the difference between the two, we must always bear in mind the standpoints which are diametrically opposed. Briefly speaking, the Buddhist philosophers arrived at the conception of Nirvāṇa or Tathāgatagarbha from the point of view of anattā, non-soul or Becoming, as contrasted with the standpoint of other philosophers, which is attā, Soul or Being.<sup>2</sup> No better characterisation of Buddhist philosophy is possible. There were among the Buddhists, Puggalavādins, even, Sāṅkhyas, but there were none who committed themselves to the Absolutist position. The Tīrthakara-theory of soul has never been accepted by the Buddhist thinkers. It may be, as we are told in the *Lankāvatārasūtra*, that they adopted the language of the Soul-theorists, but they did so with the object of rendering their theory of non-soul attractive and acceptable to the Heretics (Tīrthakarānām ākarṣanārtham).

The Vajjiputtakas or Vātsīputrīyas, as we said, were Soul-theorists among the Buddhists, but their conception of soul or personality was quite distinct from the Sāṅkhya or the Vedānta conception.<sup>1</sup> It is truly observed by Mrs. Rhys

<sup>1</sup> Petakopadesa, loc cit: Nibbāyitukāmena sutamayena atthā pariyesitabbā. Tattha pariyesanāya ayaṃ anupubbikathā.

<sup>2</sup> *Lankāvatārasūtra*, ed. Vidyabhusan, B. T. S., Fasc. II, pp. 80-1.

<sup>1</sup> Vide, Table of Contents, *Tarka-saṅgraha*, noticed by Dr. Vidyabhusan, *Indian Logic*.

Davids: "And it must be borne in mind that all those who were implicated in the controversies set-forth (in the Kathāvatthu) were within the Sāsana. All, as we should say, were Buddhists. They may not on certain matters have been 'of us', Sakavādins, but they were certainly not 'hence outside', ito bahiddhā, the term bestowed on teachers of other creeds. These are only once included together with Vajjiputtakas and Sammitiyas, and that is when the almost universally accepted dogma of a persisting personal or spiritual substrate is attacked." The Theravādins naturally sought for dialectical advantages in putting forward premisses which would make their opponents virtually confess to the Doctrine of Being (Sakkāya-ditṭhi), but one of a Sāsana was "anxious to repudiate any such imputation".<sup>1</sup> Buddhadatta has an interesting chapter on the refutation of a theory of Agent (Kāraka-paṭibedha) which presupposes a long controversy given in the Kathāvatthu (I.1). It shows that the authorities relied on by the Vajjiputtakas and others all pertained to the Buddhist canon. These were, as such, unimpeachable, and implied a theory or postulate of a personal entity, continually passing from one state to another. Buddhadatta is unable to dispute the authority of the passages cited. He has nothing to say against the Vajjiputtaka or Sāṅkantiya interpretation, except that the passages embody a common-sense view of soul, accepted by Buddha for practical purposes.<sup>2</sup>

True, as M. Oltramare points out, in his valuable little book on *Paticcasamuppāda*, that the Buddhist Nāma-Rūpa-theory was tending steadily from a certain date towards the Sāṅkhya conception of Puruṣa-Prakṛiti. The same remark applies well to the conceptions of avidyā and mūlaprakṛiti, mūlaprakṛiti and nirvāṇa.<sup>3</sup> But we find that the Buddhist thinkers are naturally anxious to keep their conceptions distinct.

<sup>1</sup> The Points of Controversy, Prefatory Notes, pp. xlvī-xlvii.

<sup>2</sup> *Abhidhammāvatāra*, pp. 85-88; "Saccam, evaṃ vuttaṃ bhagavatā, taṃ kho sammuti-vasena, neva paramatthato".

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, pp. 81, 84; *Buddhacarita*, xii, *Visuddhimagga*, ed. Buddhadatta, pp. 407-8.

Buddhist philosophy is a continuous development. The movement presents various phases or stages, each foreshadowing that which followed, and containing that which preceded, it. Thus a history of Buddhist philosophy, to be worth the name, must be divided into successive periods or epochs corresponding to those phases or stages. So far as a forecast of the plan of the work is now possible, it can be conveniently divided into four parts. The program set before us will appear to be something like this:—

Plan of the work.  
the sources of information.

*Part I. First Period (Bimbisāra to Kālāsoka):*

*Buddha and his Disciples.*

We must begin the history with Buddha and his Disciples, who were the real originators of Buddhist speculative movement. The main sources of information are the Pali Tripiṭaka, together with the three works of Mahākaccāyana above referred to. The Vedas, Upaniṣads, and Āngas will be called to our aid for a collateral evidence.

*Part II. Schismatic Period (Kālāsoka to Kaṇiṣka),*

Under this head we have to enquire in what manner the eighteen schools of interpretation and opinion arose out of the original one school, and grew fewer in course of time. The main sources of information are these: The Kathāvatthu with its commentary (now translated into English), and the works of Vasumitra, a contemporary of King Kaṇiṣka, Bhavya, and Vinītadeva. Unfortunately these works are lost in the original, but can be found in Chinese and Tibetan translations. Those who have no access to Chinese and Tibetan can read with profit Mr. Rockhill's "Life of the Buddha", and Wassilief's "Der Buddhismus".

*Part III. Classical Period (Kaṇiṣka to Harṣavardhana).*

The period may be said to date from the Milinda in which a richer synthesis of older speculations was reached. The main subject of investigation comprises the four systems—

*Madhyamika*, *Yogācāra*, *Sautrāntika*, and *Vaibhāṣika*, which sprang into existence by a further reduction of the earlier schools. The sources of information are well-known.

*Part IV. Logical Period (Guptas to Pals).*

The title chosen for this part is taken from Dr. Vidya-bhushan's thesis on Indian Logic, Medieval School.

It must be noted that this period partly overlaps the third. The major part of our sources of information is for ever lost in the original, and consequently we have to depend always on patient labours of the Chinese and Tibetan scholars. Only a few works have survived in Buddhist Sanskrit, but occasional glimpses of the Buddhist thought of this period can be obtained from incidental references in the contemporary Indian works.

To sum up : This introduction is not to be regarded as an epitome of the main work which is still to be written. Here we have been concerned to answer not what a History of Buddhist philosophy is, but whether and how it is possible. Although in passing we have discussed some side-issues, it is hoped that we have not failed to impress the main point. We have sought throughout to make clear what we precisely mean by a history of Buddhist philosophy as distinguished from a history of religion. This was essential especially because the philosophical aspect of Buddhism has received so little attention from the Buddhist scholars. We have not denied at the same time that the two aspects are really inseparably connected together. Thus the distinction contemplated here is at most tentative and provisional. We also have gone the length of saying that Buddhist philosophy, in spite of its close connexion with the Buddhist religion, is capable of a separate treatment. That is to say, the religious aspect of the movement possesses a value for us, only in so far as it represents a background of certain metaphysical problems. The religious consciousness of the Buddhists, as that of others, could not feel secure, and rest content, until its objects were supported upon a solid foundation of reason.

Summary and conclusion.



The Buddhist philosophy has been represented not only as an integral part, and an important feature, of Indian philosophy as a whole, but a distinct movement of thought realising itself progressively through different channels. The beginning and end of this movement are unknown, perhaps unknowable, and yet for convenience' sake we have proposed to trace its origin from Gotama the Buddha, and mentioned Sāṅkarānanda as its last landmark. We have further assumed that it falls into successive periods of development, and a forecast of the plan of the work has been given together with a list of the sources of information.

Now before we conclude, a word must be said concerning the use and value of a treatise on the development of Buddhist thought in India, particularly at a time when great changes in the world's history are about to take place. It is more than a pious hope that in these general upheavals a work like this will open out a world of speculation and knowledge hitherto unknown. And if we can rightly maintain that Buddhist philosophy, like others of its kind, was a rational attempt to interpret its environment in its own way, a historical study of its onward progress will certainly disclose at each step a picture of Indian society, which is so precious and rare that without a knowledge of it we cannot say whether our life has eternally flown through time. To neglect it is to lose sight of another aspect of the intellectual life in India, another standpoint from which to judge the Indo-Aryan civilisation. Even apart from this, a history of Buddhist thought may throw abundant light on many obscure corners in the political history of the country, and suggest a sounder method of interpretation of Indian literature, religion, sciences and arts than that which is hitherto followed.

The pioneers of Indian research have achieved a good deal and much more remains yet to be achieved by us their successors. We are yet far from having a connected view of our history; there are still big gaps to fill in.

It is too gigantic a task to be accomplished by one man, and as a matter of fact, it is not a work of one man, but a joint

work of many. However, each will do his or her part humbly, honestly and hopefully, and will feel his or her labour amply rewarded, if it carries us one step forward. We must forget for the time being the pangs of our wounded vanity, leave aside for a moment our profound veneration for the historic past that we know so little, and let alone for the present our personal and sectarian differences. Let us all unite in a common cause, and calmly contemplate on the course of our thought, reflecting great convulsions in our history. By contrasting the present with the past, let us see where we stand to-day intellectually, or how we can by the aid of our ancient heritage, added to modern research, bring forth a new generation of scholars, a vigorous race of thinkers who by depth of knowledge and breadth of heart will raise once more their motherland in the estimation of the civilised world. Here we have a vast field for work, a field where our labours may produce marvellous results. We are descending into depths of the past with the torch-light of history, in the hope of finding out some hidden treasures of the human heart and intellect that may perchance enrich the East as well as the West. We long waited for a scheme of the study of our ancient history and culture under the auspices of our University. Now we have got it. We owe it chiefly to the Hon'ble Justice Sir Asutosh Mookerjee whose name has to-day become a house-hold word, and to whom Bengal, nay India, will remain grateful for the many great works which he has ungrudgingly done in connexion with the University of Calcutta and the general shaping of the educational system in our country. But it rests with us, both teachers and students, to see that the scheme proves a great success in the end.

We may be permitted here to mention that the Secretary of State for India was kind enough to extend our scholarship in England to a period of one year for the purpose of collecting materials for a history of Buddhist philosophy, and we confidently look forward to the time when the work in an already finished form will justify such a generous response on his part.



